

Exhibit 141

MyPillow C.E.O.'s Trump Conspiracy Theories Put Company on the Spot

Retailers have stopped carrying its products, though Mike Lindell, the founder and face of MyPillow, blamed “cancel culture” and said he didn’t think it would last.



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For the past four years, most American corporations have tried to avoid the appearance of partisanship while also distancing themselves from the inflammatory rhetoric of former President Donald J. Trump and his supporters, walking a tightrope to keep customers and employees happy.

It has been a different story for MyPillow. Mike Lindell, the company’s founder and chief executive, has remained one of Mr. Trump’s most fervent supporters. His sustained peddling of debunked conspiracy theories about election fraud got him barred from Twitter on Monday night. With retailers like Kohl’s and other major companies cutting ties with the privately held manufacturer, Mr. Lindell has managed to make his pillows partisan.

“It goes to my money, you know where my money’s going,” Mr. Lindell said in an interview this month with a pro-Trump online channel called Right Side Broadcasting Network, offering a discount code for viewers to use on MyPillow’s website.

Mr. Lindell’s baseless claims of election fraud have prompted a backlash against MyPillow in recent weeks, with several retailers deciding to stop carrying its products, an example of just how strongly his personality dominates the public perception of his company.

Mr. Lindell, a former crack cocaine and gambling addict, founded the company after the idea for MyPillow came to him in a dream in 2004, according to his memoir. He is now a devout Christian and credits God with aiding his recovery.

MyPillow is based in Chaska, Minn., and Mr. Lindell said in an interview this week that it employed nearly 2,500 people. Its products — it carries more than 100 — have been widely distributed in national chains, and Mr. Lindell’s face is prominently featured in infomercials and boxes carrying its patented pillows. Two former MyPillow employees, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they feared retaliation, said they were asked to display multiple cardboard cutouts of the executive in stores and to play his infomercials.



Mr. Lindell with Mr. Trump at a White House event in 2017. Stephen Crowley/The New York Times

Politics became a bigger part of Mr. Lindell and MyPillow’s identity in the past decade, following the success of its infomercials, which first aired in 2011 and were later a hit on Fox News, according to the memoir and interviews with former employees.

The company has said in court filings that it spends an average of \$5 million a month on advertising. While Mr. Lindell said he had advertised in The New York Times and on CNN, much of his spending has been with Fox News — 59 percent of the company’s total television spending last year, according to data from MediaRadar — which raised his profile with the former president, an avid viewer of

the network.

“Politics does not hurt your business,” he said in the interview this week. “I have not alienated anybody except for the bots and the trolls and the hit jobs of the media.”

Mr. Lindell said MyPillow’s 2019 revenue exceeded \$300 million. MyPillow sells through its website and is carried by retail behemoths like Walmart, Amazon and Costco.

The company is tightknit, and its leadership leans conservative, with Mr. Lindell employing many members of his own family and even a sister of former Vice President Mike Pence, according to Aaron Morgan, a procurement planner at MyPillow between September 2019 and last March.

“Most companies say don’t talk about politics,” Mr. Morgan said, noting that Mr. Lindell was pleasant. “But a lot of people there talked about politics. People there leaned obviously toward Mike’s beliefs because they were all family. It was not uncommon to see MAGA hats on desks.”



Mr. Lindell had a deck of playing cards in the MyPillow office depicting Mr. Trump. Aaron Morgan

Mr. Morgan shared photos of playing cards that Mr. Lindell offered to employees last year, which used a king card to display Mr. Trump as a proxy for Julius Caesar, Hillary Clinton in an orange prison jumpsuit on a queen card, and Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senator Chuck Schumer as jokers. Mr. Lindell, whose likeness was also in the deck, said that the cards were given to him as a gift and kept in his office and that employees were able to take them if they wished.

Mr. Lindell’s politics entered his company in other ways. On Jan. 6, the day of the riot at the Capitol, MyPillow’s website was accepting a “FightForTrump” discount code that a conservative radio host had promoted on his show. Mr. Lindell, who retweeted the discount code that day, claimed without evidence that Twitter employees gained access to his account and retweeted the post in his name.

“We have reviewed the rule violations and consequential enforcement activity and have found no evidence supporting Mr. Lindell’s allegations,” a Twitter representative said.

The violence in Washington set in motion a social media campaign against MyPillow and Mr. Lindell, spearheaded by the group Sleeping Giants, which was created in 2016 to stop companies from advertising on Breitbart News. The pressure prompted retailers like Bed Bath & Beyond, Kohl’s, H-E-B, Today’s Shopping Choice in Canada and Wayfair to drop MyPillow products, according to Mr. Lindell, who said without providing evidence that the protest was led by “bots and trolls.”

Bed Bath & Beyond and Kohl’s cited the brand’s poor performance for their exits, while Today’s Shopping Choice did not comment beyond confirming the removal. Wayfair declined to comment, and H-E-B did not respond to requests for comment. Zulily said it stopped carrying MyPillow in July. Affirm, the financing start-up, separately confirmed that it severed ties with MyPillow last week.



Senator Chuck Schumer and Speaker Nancy Pelosi were shown as jokers in the deck. Aaron Morgan

Matt Rivitz, a co-founder of Sleeping Giants, said the claim about bots was “ridiculous.” Throughout the Trump presidency, he said, consumers grew more aware of their collective power, beginning with ads on Breitbart and boycotts of Ivanka Trump products at Nordstrom. This has been the culmination of those efforts.

“There were a number of videos that came out with Lindell doing these rants about how the election was stolen and clearly that led to violence,” Mr. Rivitz said. “It was just a natural inclination to ask companies if they supported that because ultimately these companies have greatly benefited from democracy and they likely don’t want to see the country fall into chaos because of these lies.”

Trump’s Bid to Subvert the Election

A monthslong campaign. During his last days in office, President Donald J. Trump and his allies undertook an increasingly urgent effort to undermine the election results. That wide-ranging campaign included perpetuating false and thoroughly debunked claims of election fraud as well as pressing government officials for help.

Mr. Lindell said only one of the companies that had dropped his products cited false information about voting machines, but added, “It’s pretty coincidental when over nine companies do that the same day.” Still, he said he was not concerned about the impact on his business. He added that he did not view his comments to Right Side Broadcasting as “politically skewed” and blamed “cancel culture” for the retailers’ actions, though he anticipated they would return to selling his products.

This month, Mr. Lindell was photographed at the White House carrying notes that mentioned the Insurrection Act, by which a president can deploy active military troops into the streets.

Until around 2011, MyPillow was run out of a former bus garage in Minnesota, with roughly 40 employees, according to Tonja Waring, who worked there from 2009 to 2012 and appeared in its infomercials. Ms. Waring said Mr. Lindell was fiercely loyal and regularly pushed back against conventional wisdom on issues like maintaining manufacturing in the United States.

Mr. Lindell was also included among the Trump presidential playing cards. Aaron Morgan

“He doesn’t care what people think or what they say — he cares about doing the right thing,” she said. She added that Mr. Lindell had grown more comfortable in the spotlight than when she first met him, when he was “barely able to go on TV.”

While the infomercials fueled MyPillow’s rise, they have also drawn complaints. In one settlement in 2016, MyPillow paid \$995,000 in penalties after a group of district attorneys in California took issue with the company’s claims that its products could soothe insomnia, fibromyalgia and other medical conditions. Last year, Mr. Lindell also faced criticism after pitching an unproven Covid-19 “cure” to Mr. Trump.

When customers asked about health claims made in MyPillow commercials, the two former store employees said, they would try to evade the subject without confirming or denying promises made in the ads. One former employee said Mr. Lindell also pushed stores to sell other products that workers were wary to endorse, such as a powder that claimed to stop wounds from bleeding within seconds.

In his memoir, Mr. Lindell wrote of “a shady bankruptcy” he declared in 2003 to avoid a lawsuit involving a bar he owned, working with a lender he had met through his bookie’s stepson, who encouraged Mr. Lindell to concoct fake creditors.

“It wouldn’t be the first time I’d colored outside the lines of the law,” he wrote of the episode.

Even now, as retailers cut ties and he has been kicked off Twitter, Mr. Lindell is defiant, convinced that “real people” do not care about the claims he has been perpetuating.

“The people on the left, the Democrats, they’re buying the same amount of product they always buy from me,” he said, “and the people supporting me standing up to cancel culture are buying more.”